



Third Annual Conference and Recognition Banquet
December 8-9, 2005
Summary and Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

On December 8-9, 2005, approximately 95 Network of Michigan educators and 11 intern teachers attended the Third Annual Network of Michigan Educators Conference and Recognition Banquet, “Connections for Action,” at the Lansing Radisson Hotel. The purpose of the conference was to:

- Celebrate the success of educators by recognizing and rewarding them;
- Activate educators by involving them in the professional leadership and policy influence;
- Inspire educators to develop and maintain active connections that will influence and improve education in Michigan classrooms;
- Elevate the teaching profession.

Those in attendance included members of the Network of Michigan Educators, representatives from the Department of Education, and members of the State Board of Education. For the first time, teacher interns also took part in the conference and banquet. The Network of Michigan Educators is comprised of 400 educators recognized through the Michigan Teacher of the Year Program, Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, Milken National Educator Award, National Board Certification, Christa McAuliffe Fellowship Program, Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship Program, Disney Teacher Awards, Michigan Elementary-Middle School Principal of the Year, National Distinguished Principal, Michigan Secondary School Principal of the Year, and Michigan Superintendent of the Year. The executive committee of the Network consists of: Dave Borth – Chair, Frank Miracola – Vice Chair, Nancy Flanagan – Secretary, Cindy Hasselbring – Treasurer, and Jean Shane – MDE Liaison.



Collaborative Partnership Working to Improve Education



www.nme-educators.org

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

DAY ONE – Thursday, December 8th – Inspiration

I. Keynote Speech – *Inspire, What Great Leaders Do* – Lance Secretan

Award winning author, Lance Secretan, shared his thoughts on inspirational leadership. Great leaders inspire superior performance by speaking to the inner lives and deeper needs of employees, and by aligning their desires with your organization's cause.

- Every great teacher is a person who inspires. What do your students want from you? An inspiring teacher – just as you want inspiring students.
- Leadership is something someone lives, not something one tells others to do.
- Tear up your mission statements and replace them with a CAUSE! Creating a cause will attract passion and will draw the best people to the organization.
- The first mission of all great leaders is: How do I serve? Am I serving those whom I am leading?

II. Breakout Sessions

A. ONE: The Art and Practice of Conscious Leadership – Lance Secretan

The greatest leaders of history have all been Conscious Leaders – inspiring others in their endeavors and enlisting them in their dreams – seeing the whole, larger picture. The Conscious Leader is guided in life by six principles: courage, authenticity, service, truthfulness, love and effectiveness.

B. Conversation with the Michigan State Board of Education – Kathy Straus, Liz Bauer, Carolyn Curtin

This was a unique opportunity to have an open conversation with members of the State Board of Education. It was an outstanding opportunity for dialogue and the development of a common understanding and relationships for the future.

C. How Flat is the World and What Does this Mean for Education – Dan Pappas, Director of the Michigan Institute for Educational Management

Using some of the key concepts from Thomas Friedman's Book, *The World is Flat*, Dan provided an opportunity to engage in reflection and discussion. A look at what lies ahead helped educational leaders to prepare and respond to the needs of our children and society.

D. Courage to Teach/Courage to Lead – Marianne Novak Houston

This brief introduction to the work of Dr. Parker J. Palmer (*The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* and *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*) took the form of a mini-retreat.

E. The Soil Where Teaching Grows – Carol Steele, NBCT

This session was a cascade of divergent ideas to encourage new approaches to persistent problems. Carol led the participants through a series of findings from a variety of fields (e.g., psychology, medicine, biology, architecture, etc.), asking what the implications might be for educators.

III. Recognition Banquet

The recognition banquet celebrated the commitment and excellence of Michigan educators. Numerous awards were presented to dedicated teachers, interns and administrators from around the state. The Network recognized the DTE Energy Foundation, the Hawthorne Learning Center, and the Michigan Education Association for their financial support of the Network Banquet and Conference. Also joining the recognized educators at the banquet were State Board of Education members, Kathleen Straus, Liz Bauer, Carolyn Curtin, and Nancy Danhof; Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan; staff from the Michigan Department of Education; and representatives from many state-level education associations.

DAY TWO – Friday, December 9th – Action

IV. Keynote Speech – *Focus on High Priority Initiatives* – Yvonne Caamal Canul, Director MDE Office of School Improvement

This presentation focused on the work that the Department of Education is doing with high priority schools. Yvonne explained the definition of a high priority school and the phases that a school may pass through as it works toward improvement.

V. Network of Michigan Educators Membership Meeting – led by Dave Borth

- A. Finances – MIEM has agreed to become the fiscal agent for the network. This will provide the Network with a means of handling grants and other monies. It was moved, and unanimously passed, to add the office of treasurer to the Network.
- B. New NME website – Features of the new Network website were introduced (www.nme-educators.org).
- C. Ask the Network – Frank Miracola led a review of the features of the Ask the Network page.
- D. NME Blog – Jordy Whitmer explained how to use the NME blog on the Network website.

VI. Plenary Session – High School Reform – Mike Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Description: Mike presented the current education situation in Michigan and explained the State Board's plan to increase rigor in Michigan high schools. No longer can Michigan be known as the "civics only" state. Mike also stressed the importance of emphasizing relevance in the classroom. Rigor without relevance is useless.

VII. Breakout Sessions

A. Action Study Teams 2005 – Nancy Flanagan and Lauren Childs

This session offered educators an opportunity to: understand the role of Action Study Teams in support of the mission of the NME; hear about current Action Study Teams; and learn how to start an Action Study Team.

B. Policy Action at the State Level – Bob Morris, MDE Legislative Liaison

Bob shared a wealth of experience with the attendees helping grow an understanding of how the legislative process works in Lansing. Participants also learned how to influence the legislative process both at home and in Lansing.

C. MI-MAP – Office of School Improvement – Charlotte O’Brien and Yvonne Mayfield, MDE Field Services Consultants

The Michigan Department of Education has developed a dynamic new tool kit to assist schools in their school improvement efforts. The MI-Map Tool Kit provides schools with over 300 practical strategies and materials to shape, support, and sustain school improvement. Charlotte O’Brien and Yvonne Mayfield led the participants in a tour of the kit.

D. School Improvement Framework – Office of School Improvement – Betty Underwood, MDE Assistant Director, Curriculum and Instruction Unit

Betty Underwood facilitated a discussion of the Michigan School Improvement Framework. The Framework was developed by educators for educators to provide a cohesive foundation to develop, review or revise school and district school improvement plans. The Framework is based on current research that identifies proven practices for effective and continuous school improvement.

E. Connecting NME Members with Existing Mentoring Programs (ASSIST) – Cheryl Poole, MDE Professional Development Consultant and Marcia Leone, MSU Academic Outreach Specialist

To help Michigan’s beginning teachers succeed, the MDE and MSU have partnered to design ASSIST (Advocating Strong Standards-based Induction Support for Teachers). ASSIST is a comprehensive effort to support beginning teachers, mentors, and school administrators responsible for implementing beginning teacher induction programs. Marcia and Cheryl facilitated a hands-on experience with ASSIST for the participants.

F. Visiting Legislative Offices – Bob Morris and Dave Borth

Network members learned procedures for meeting with their legislators at home and in Lansing. Several members visited their legislators or their staff and introduced the Network to them.

G. Job Alike Conversations

An opportunity was provided for members to network, talk shop, plan for the future, etc. with teachers and administrators from a particular school level.

H. Award Alike Conversations

An opportunity was provided for members to network, talk shop, plan for the future, etc. with teachers from a specific award group.

CONFERENCE EVALUATION

Following the conference, 40 participants took advantage of the opportunity to complete a zoomerang survey to evaluate the conference and banquet. Many results are below.

1. The overall quality of my experience at the conference was:

Excellent (82%) Good (18%) Fair (0%) Poor (0%)

2. My professional gains from the conference included:

- New appreciation of the gifts of the network members.
- Big thought to consider – motivation vs. inspiration.
- Always a fabulous way to network! Love meeting new awardees and NBCT.
- Reconnecting with a number of quality educators, learning more about the program for board certification.
- Renewed interest in continuing to make a difference in the classroom! Being around positive people who have excellent ways to inspire students is always a wonderful place to be!!
- The Courage to Teach session was, by far, the best of all the sessions for me. The presenter modeled the CtT philosophy and process, inspired those present to further investigate Palmer's ideas, and showed how valuable an experienced practitioner's perspective can be for us all.
- I learned that I need to be inspiring. That message, more than any other, has stuck with me. It's a tall order.
- Networking ... I so enjoyed meeting like minded people and being able to share the journey. Thank you!
- The best was hearing the message of Lance and how I am going to pursue my passions and make my job a much better place where I inspire those around me.
- Although I was sick, it still was good making connections with other educators and bouncing ideas off from them and listening to their best practices.
- Coming back to my district inspired
- Being able to network with outstanding educators. Understanding the process for high priority schools. Discussing the high school grad requirements with Mike Flanagan.
- Higher level, motivational conversations. I felt appreciated.
- Joined an Action-Study group. Made lots of great contacts. Got inspired.
- Renewed enthusiasm (never hurts to recharge!!) and more detailed knowledge of specific challenges at the state and national level.
- I came back to my building and have requested meetings with various administrators to share what I learned and also how to use that knowledge in my school district.
- I gained a better vision of what is happening in the state and how all of these pieces are connected. As I work to shape things in my own district, it is great to know how our district connects into what is happening at the state level and in the communities around us.

- Contacts to get involved in an action study team. I feel this will be a way to expand and extend my classroom teaching. Connections within my school are broadening and enriching but moving outside that group will be supportive, as well. This type of conference gives me more of an understanding and push for involvement beyond my building and district. Thanks for that push.
- The need for high level personal renewal among educators, especially those who give themselves so generously and so constantly, is great. I will continue to work with educators, though my profession is constantly calling on me to work more with other professionals!

3. I attended the Recognition Banquet. My reflections and comments are as follows:

- Outstanding – also loved my session with the SBE.
- I thought it was great to recognize the interns that were attending.
- Wow! What wonderful speeches (from the heart) from the Milken award winners and the teacher of the year!
- It is always wonderful to hear from the newly recognized!
- I am always buoyed up by the observations and comments of new people in the recognition spotlight. The highlight of the evening for me was listening to the award recipient's remarks.
- It was a great event.
- I felt the banquet was a nice recognition and done in a tasteful manner. I loved the speeches from the latest winners.
- It was a good event. It was nice hearing the reflections from the three teachers. It added meaning to the whole evening.
- I enjoyed hearing Mike Flanagan and hearing his views.
- I thought it was very nice. I enjoyed listening to the award winning teachers speak.
- It was a good length. It afforded time for conversations and left time to debrief at the end during unstructured time.
- Excellent.
- Well done. I appreciated the succinct but substantial format – left time for relaxing after a long day.
- Excellent job! What an outstanding group of educators we have in our state.
- Delightful evening . . . inspiring group of educators.
- National Board Teachers need more recognition than just standing and being recognized.
- It was well-structured and lots of fun. Thanks to the planners and participants.

4. Suggestions on ways to improve future conferences.

- Mentor more interns
- To provide further activities to meet policy makers and become more of an "education" advocate.
- Specific lunch table discussion to start or end lunch (just to get everyone talking).
- Would like to see more breakout sessions that are cutting edge or pushing the envelope.
- I liked having the conference at the Radisson - one place for everyone. They were very accommodating.

- Maybe we can concentrate on best practices classroom procedures and relationship building with students. The way to achieve higher standards will be paved with schools and teachers who meet the needs of the students.
- As teachers we know that when students interact with each other and the material actively they learn better. I find lecture format, where we're trying to be active listeners for 2 full hours, with no discussion, no interaction very difficult and NOT inspiring! Lance Secretan was great because he gave opportunities for discussion in his sessions. A natural teacher. Can we have more of this kind of "workshop?" If it's going to be a lecture let's put "lecture" in the program and those of us who know we don't learn well that way can avoid those sessions!
- If we could have a way for more interaction between the teachers themselves. I talked with a couple of other science teachers and left the conference with some great ideas that I may be able to incorporate into my classroom.
- Maybe it could be scheduled so the weather would not play much of a part in the transportation problems. Perhaps in the spring.
- Some teachers may prefer more practical application to classroom teaching. I am an administrator and enjoyed the offerings, but could see where the regular classroom teacher may want a combination of the political and practical.
- Much better than last year's--seemed more focused and productive
- Continue to offer opportunities that connect teachers with legislators and policy makers - this may prove to be a key ingredient that moves education for the students of Michigan beyond today's challenges!
- Absolutely none. I loved the location as well.
- Keep the focus on connections.
- This was top notch, I am not sure you could do much better! Excellent experience.
- It was great having it all right there (the conference and the hotel) especially with the weather.

5. Additional Comments

- The legislative office visits were very interesting. Both senators were home in their districts. It was suggested to me by a friend and nonprofit agency director that NME might consider organizing visits to legislative home offices where elected
- Officials are most ready to listen and take time with constituents.
- The NME committee put together an amazing variety of informative sessions. I thoroughly enjoyed this conference. The one thing I notice with this group of teachers is that during the sessions there were no side bars or other distractions. I guess teachers of this quality know how to listen and be polite. I was very pleased at that because often I have found some teachers to be somewhat rude at conferences.
- Kendra Hearn, Jerry LeCrieux, Tim Fulcher, and Julie Helber are planning to have an action study team focusing on the Relationships piece of Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. We would like to see this as a possible focus for next year's conference. We will be discussing our work over the next few months on the blog site. We would love additional comments from the network.
- encouraged/empowered/energized!!
- We need to have more contact with the student teachers that attend. Small group meetings!

Conference Participants

NME Members:

Rosemary Amene, G. Asenath Andrews, Diane Baumstark, Ann Marie Borders, Dave Borth, Cathleen Brackett, Jean Buller, Heidi Capraro, Victoria Catalina, Lauren Childs, Jeanine Clever, Randy Cook, Conni Crittendon, Michele Dale Cannaert, Pat Denton, Judith DePew, Thomas Dolan, Bud Ellis, Ted Emch, Delores Flagg, Nancy Flanagan, Jill Fleming, Constance Flynn, Timothy Fulcher, Denise Golden, Julia Green, June Green-Rivers, Kathie Grzesiak, Susan Gutierrez, Char Hanchak, Tina Harma, Cindy Hasselbring, Kendra Hearn, Julie Helber, Catherine Hernandez, Amy Hodgson, Margaret Hotschlag, L. Janel Horrocks-Boehmer, Les Howard, Sharen Howard, Kyle Hughes, Sandy Joslin, David Kapolka, Tara Kachaturoff, Thomas P. Kelly, Susan Kielb, Kimberly Kyff, Douglas Law, Gerald LeCureux, Jane Levy, Jim Linsell, Efrenia MacLean, Beverly, Matulis, Chris McCauliffe, Linda McConville, Frank Miracola, Barabara Pickens Misuraca, Karen Morrison, Ann Murphy, Cathey Newhouse, Anne Marie Nicoll Turner, Marianne Novak Houston, Suzanne O'Brien, Patricia O'Connor, Pamela Ogle, Janice Parady, Bob Pennock, Linda Peterson, Bethany Rayl, Marsha Sakwa, Alfonso Salais, Dan Schab, Catherine Schrock, Stewart Schultz, Maureen Schwartzhoff, Gerald Sinkel, Wendy Smith, Diane Spence, Carol Steele, Robert Stephenson, Andrea Stevenson, Mike Stinnett, Elizabeth Sutherland, June Teisan, Mary Tomaszewski, David Truog, Karrie Tufts, Jose Valderas, Gretchen Vermiglio, Vikki Wandmacher, Michael Weiskopf, Cheryl Wells, Jordy Whitmer, Rosa Williams, Christa Wise, Lynda Wood, Robin Ziebert, Jean Shane

Teacher Interns:

Lisa Bilodeau, Stephanie Dost, Mitch Fowler, Sara Knoth, Benjamin Lorson, Robert Magee, Christa McKay, Katherine Rinz-Wirsing, Katherine Taylor, Nancy Veltema, Detta Wilson (These students attend either Ferris State University, Michigan State University, and Saginaw Valley State University.)

Districts Represented:

Addison, Ann Arbor, Bay City, Berkley, Birmingham, Cadillac, Carman-Ainsworth, Caseville, Chippewa Valley, Clarkston, Conner Creek Academy, Dearborn, Detroit, Dexter, East Lansing, Eaton Rapids, Farmington, Flint, Forest Hills, Grand Ledge, Grand Ledge, Grandville, Harper Woods, Hartland, Haslett, Hazel Park, Holt, Howell, Huron Valley, Jackson Northwest, Kalamazoo, L'Anse Creuse, Lansing, Lapeer, Malcolm X Academy, Midland, Milan, Monroe, Niles, Northville, Oakland, Plymouth-Canton, Pontiac, Rochester, Romulus, Royal Oak, Saginaw, Saginaw Valley, Saugatuck, South Lyon, Southfield, St. Joseph, Traverse City, Tri County, Van Buren, Walled Lake, Waverly, West Bloomfield, Whitmore Lake, Woodhaven-Brownstown, Williamston, Ypsilanti. Nonpublic school represented: St. Peter's Lutheran/Big Rapids.

Sponsors:

State Board of Education, Michigan Department of Education, DTE Energy Foundation, the Hawthorne Learning Center, and the Michigan Education Association

